

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENNA 07358 061629Z

61

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 7358

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TAGS: PBOR, AU, CZ

SUBJ: SOURINGHOF AUSTRIAN-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: SECOND AUSTRIAN-CZECHOSLOVAK (CS) AIR INCIDENT IN SIX WEEKS, AGAIN INVOLVING DEATH TWO AUSTRIANS, AHS AROUSED AUSTRIAN PUBLIC AND PRESS AND SOURED AUSTRIAN-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS. AUSTRIAN FONMIN PLANNING MEET CS FONMIN AT 28TH UNGA END THIS MONTH TO TAKE READING ON OUTLOOK FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS. END SUMMARY

2. ACTION OF CZECHOSLOVAK MILITARY AIRCRAFT SEPTEMBER 2, IN ATTEMPTING FORCE DOWN AUSTRIAN PRIVATE MOTOR-GLIDER WHICH HAD PENETRATED CZECHOSLOVAK AIR SPACE ABOUT 17 MILES AND RESULTING IN COLLISIONN COLLAPSE OF GLIDER, ITS CRASH AND DEATH OF GLIDER'S TWO AUSTRIAN OCCUPANTS, HAS GENERATED SHARP PUBLIC REACTION AND AUSTRIAN PRESS DENUNCIATION OF INCIDENT AS SENSELESS ACT OF OVERZEALOUS REACTION, INAPPROPRIATE TO CIRCUMSTANCES OF VIOLATION OF CZECHOSLOVAK AIR SPACE.

3. ON SEPTEMBER 4 GOA REJECTED CZECHOSLOVAK NOTE OF SEPTEMBER 3 PROTESTING VIOLATION CSSR AIR SPACE AS INAPPROPRIATE SINCE GOA NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTIONS OF CIVILIAN PRIVATE AIRCRAFT. FONMIN KIRCHSCHLAEGER, IN PUBLIC STATEMENT ON INCIDENT, HAS PROPOSED EARLY CREATION OF JOINT AUSTRIAN-CS COMMISSION, SIMILAR TO AUSTRIAN-HUNGARIAN ONE, TO INVESTIGATE BORDER INCIDENTS FOR PURPOSE

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PAGE 02 VIENNA 07358 061629Z

TRIAN-HUNGARIAN ONE, TO INVESTIGATE BORDER INCIDENTS FOR PURPOSE

HOPEFULLY OF PRECLUDING SUCH INCIDENTS IN FUTURE.

4. AMBASSADOR MAGRUTSCH, HEAD OF SOVIET-EC SECTION IN FOREIGN OFFICE, INFORMED POLCOUN SEPTEMBER 6 THAT FONMIN, IN INTERNAL DISCUSSION INCIDENT SEPTEMBER 5, HAS RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDED, IN WAKE OF SIMILAR AIR INCIDENT ABOUT 6 WEEKS AGO (ALSO RESULTING IN DEATH OF TWO AUSTRIANS) THAT ELEMENTS IN CONTROL OF CS GOVERNMENT DO NOT APPEAR TO BE REALLY INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING NORMAL, FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH AUSTRIA. ONE IMMEDIATE RESULT THIS CONCLUSION IS THAT FONOFF IS LESS HOPEFUL THAN EARLIER ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR BREAKING IMPASSE ON AMOUNT COMPENSATION TO BE PAID AUSTRIA IN MUTUAL CLAIMS TALKS WHICH WERE EXPECTED TO BE RESUMED THIS FALL.

5. GOA HOPES TO AVOID BECOMING ENGAGED IN POLEMICAL EXCHANGE WITH CS OVER AIR INCIDENT BUT PUBLIC OPINION, AROUSED BY AUSTRIAN PRESS CAMPAIGN OF DENUNCIATION OF CS ACTIONS, MAY FORCE IT TO TAKE STRONGER PUBLIC STAND ON ISSUE.

6. AUSTRIAN FONMIN KIRCHSCHLAEGER, WHO HAD EXPECTED TO USE SCHEDULED MEETING WITH CS FONMIN AT 28TH UNGA END THIS MONTH TO ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE IMPASSE ON CLAIMS, NOW ANTICIPATES, ACCORDING TO MAGRUTSCH, TO USE OCCASION TO REVIEW CURRENT POOR STATE OF AUSTRIAN-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS AND WHAT, IF ANY, PROSPECTS THERE ARE FOR THEIR IMPROVEMENT. HUMES

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